

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 EB-08 /086 W
-----220826Z 035443 /13

R 211555Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8237
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: CHANGE AT HELM OF SPD IN BAVARIA

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SPD IN BAVARIA IS DANCING
TO ANOTHER TEMPO AS A RESULT OF ELECTON OF NEW LEADERSHIP
AT ITS LAND CONVENTION MARCH 18-19. AT CONVENTION,
DR. HELMUT ROTHMUND, THE NEW LAND CHAIRMAN, CHARTED
NEW COURSE DESIGNED TO AVOID INTERNAL WRANGLING WHICH
HAS CHARACTERIZED PARTY IN RECENT YEARS AND FOCUSSES ALL
PARTY'S ENGERIES ON STRUGGLE WITH CSU. EX-CHAIRMAN
HANS-JOCHEN VOGEL'S FAREWELL SPEECH CALLED ON
PARTY TO RETURN TO POLICY OF CONCRETE APPLICATION OF
TRADITIONAL SPD PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND
ECONOMIC SECURITY TO CONSTANTLY EVOLVING POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC REALITIES. IT IS OPEN QUESTION WHETHER
BAVARIAN SPD'S NEW COURSE WILL ENABLE IT TO REGAIN
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DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE NECESSARY TO REVERSE, IN
1978 COMMUNAL AND LANDTAG ELECTIONS, PARTY'S STEADY
DOWNWARD SLIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. ROTHMUND'S NEW COURSE: ROTHMUND IS CONVINCED
THAT LARGE NUMBER OF VAVARIAN VOTERS PERCEIVE SPD HERE AS
"BRANCH OF NORTH GERMAN ENTERPRISE." HE MADE CONSCIOUS

EFFORT, THEREFORE, TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN BAVARIAN SPD AND SPD NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS. ROTHMUND UNDERLINED FACT THAT BAVARIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, HILE PART OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GERMANY, HAVE OWN ROOTS AND TRADITIONS IN BAVARIA. HE WAS DEPARTED FROM STANDARD SPD LINE BY ENDORSING USE OF "LANDESLISTEN" RATHER THAN BUNDESLISTEN" IN ELECTION OF FRG REPRESENTATIVES TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED VALUE OF CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM IN RELATIONS BETWEEN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND "LANDER."

3. VOGEL'S FAREWELL: IN ONE OF HIS BEST SPEECHES IN RECENT YEARS, OUTGOING LAND CHAIRMAN (AND FEDERAL MINISTER OF JUSTICE) VOGEL ANALYZED REASONS FOR SPD'S LOSSES IN 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION AND SUGGESTED WAYS IN WHICH PARTY MIGHT RECOVER. VOGEL SAW SPD'S LOSSES HERE IN 1974 LANDTAG AND 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS IN BROADER CONTEXT OF SPD'S LOSSES IN FRG AS WHOLE. HE ATTRIBUTED SPD'S LOSSES TO LACK OF REALISM, "IDEAOLOGICAL ONE-EYEDNESS," AND PROPENSITY OF SOME TO FIGHT "THE IDEAOLOGICAL BATTLES OF YESTERDAY." "ARE THERE," VOGEL ASKED RHETORICALLY "CONCENTRATION CAMPS ONLY IN CHILE? IS THERE PERSECUTION OF THOSE WHO THINK DIFFERENTLY ONLY IN SOUTH KOREA?" IN OBLIQUE RREFERENCE TO U.S. INTERVENTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, VOGEL ASKED WHY IT "SHOULD BE GOOD IN ONE CASE AND BAD IN ANOTHER WHEN DIVISIONS FROM WESTERN HEMISPHERE INTERVENE IN FOREIGN CONTINENTS." VOGEL CHARACTERIZED DAMAGE RESULTING FROM THE INTRA-PARTY DISPUTES WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE TORN SPD HERE AS GREATER THAN THAT WREAKED BY THE POLITICAL OPPONENT. HE CALLED ON PARTY TO APPLY ITS TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SECURITY TO SUCH PRESENT DAY PROBLEMS AS: NORTH-SOUTH ISSUE; ECONOMIC GROWTH; NUCLEAR ENERGY; AND UNIFICATIONOF EUROPE.

4. BAHR'S CONTRIBUTION: IN BRIEF SPEECH TO DELEGATES, BAHR PLEDGED SUPPORT OF SPD NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS TO BAVARIAN SPD FOR BOTH COMMUNAL AND LANDESTAG ELECTIONS IN 1978. HE UNWITTINGLY OFFENDED MANY DELEGATES BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT IMPROVEMENT IN SITUATION IN MUNICH SPD WOULD LEAD TO IMPROVEMENT OF SITUATION FOR SPD ORGANIZATIONS IN COUNTRYSIDE. DELEGATES FROM OUTSIDE MUNICH FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN RATHER SUCCESSFUL DESPITE MUNICH DEBACLE AND THEREFORE WANT PARTY LEADERS TO DRAW CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEIR PERFORMANCE AND THAT OF MUNICH.

5. COMMENT:

(A) EX-CHAIRMAN VOGEL HAD HIMSELF BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THE PROCESS OF POLARIZATION OF BAVARIAN SPD INTO LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS. HE HAD TO STEP ASIDE, THEREFORE, IF THERE WERE TO BE ANY CHANCE OF ATTAINING PARTY UNITY FOR 1978 ELECTIONS. FOR TIME BEING AT LEAST, VOGEL REMAINS MOST IMPORTANT BAVARIAN SPD LEADER ON NATIONAL SCENE AS WELL AS BEST-KNOWN AND MOST ATTRACTIVE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT IN AND FROM BAVARIA.

(B) ROTHEMUND, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF SPD "FRAKTION" IN BAVARIAN LANDTAG, HAS UNDERSTANDABLY PUT SHARPLY INCREASED EMPHASIS ON SPD'S CHALLENGE TO CSU ON "LAND" LEVEL. HIS STRATEGY OF FOCUSING ON COMMON EFFORT AGAINST THE CSU AND AVOIDING EXACERBATION OF THE INTERNAL CONTROVERSIES WHICH STILL LIE BENEATH THE SURFACE SEEMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIKELY TO HOLD THROUGH 1978 COMMUNAL AND LANDTAG ELECTIONS. WE WONDER, HOWEVER, WHETHER ROTHEMUND WHO IS A MODERATE HIMSELF, CAN AVOID OPEN CLASHES WITH "LEFT ELEMENTS ONCE 1978 ELECTIONS ARE OVER.BETTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 21-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MUNICH00817
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770097-0692
Format: TEL
From: MUNICH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770339/aaaabhtu.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8facd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3046896
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHANGE AT HELM OF SPD IN BAVARIA
TAGS: PINT, GE, SPD, CSU, (ROTHEMUND, HELMUT), (VOGEL, HANS-JOCHEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8facd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009